

Message Text

CONFIDENTIAL

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ACTION SS-25

INFO OCT-01 ISO-00 SSO-00 /026 W
-----089830 021641Z /42

O R 021305Z MAR 78
FM AMEMBASSY BRASILIA
TO SECSTATE WASHDC IMMEDIATE 6304
INFO AMCONSUL RIO DE JANEIRO
AMCONSUL SAO PAULO

C O N F I D E N T I A L SECTION 1 OF 2 BRASILIA 1558

STADIS////////////////////
EXDIS

EO 11652 GDS
TAGS OVIP (CARTER, JIMMY), BR
SUBJECT: PRESIDENT'S TRIP

REF: STATE 51710

1. AMCONSUL RIO DE JANEIRO HAS PROVIDED THE FOLLOWING EVALUATION OF THE ALTERNATIVE FORMULA FOR A PRESIDENTIAL MEETING WITH CARDINAL ARNS SUGGESTED IN REFTEL: EMBASSY WILL RECALL THAT BISHOP ADRIANO HYPOLITO WAS KIDNAPPED BRIEFLY IN 1976, PRESUMABLY BY RIGHT WING EXTREMISTS ASSOCIATED WITH BRAZILIAN ANTI-COMMUNIST ALLIANCE. THIS CASE ATTRACTED CONSIDERABLE NOTORIETY AT THE TIME. HYPOLITO HAS A REPUTATION AS ONE OF THE MORE LIBERAL MEMBERS OF THE CHURCH IN THE RIO DE JANEIRO AREA. HIS INCLUSION IN A MEETING WITH THE PRESIDENT AND THE TWO CARDINALS WOULD BE INTERPRETED BY THE MEDIA AND, UNDOUBTEDLY, BY LOCAL AND NATIONAL OFFICIALS AS A GESTURE INTENDED TO SHOW US SOLIDARITY WITH THE EXTREME LIBERAL WING OF THE CHURCH. FOR THIS REASON, IN OUR ESTIMATE AN INVITATION TO DOM HYPOLITO TO PARTICIPATE IN A MEETING WITH THE PRESIDENT WOULD PROBABLY BE EVEN MORE IRRITATING TO GEISEL AND OTHERS IN BRASILIA THAN A MEETING BETWEEN THE PRESIDENT AND CARDINAL ARNS,
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WHOSE ENCOUNTER WITH THE PRESIDENT CAN AT LEAST BE JUSTIFIED BY PRIOR PERSONAL CONTACTS AND HIS POSITION IN THE CHURCH'S HIERARCHY AS ONE OF BRAZIL'S SEVEN CARDINALS. NO SUCH JUSTIFICATION EXISTS WITH DOM HYPOLITO.

2. THE EMBASSY SUPPORTS RIO'S JUDGMENT THAT DOM HYPOLITO'S PARTICIPATION IN A MEETING WITH THE PRESIDENT WOULD MAKE IT CONSIDER-

ABLY MORE IRRITATING TO GOB. THE "COURTESY CALL" COVER FOR SUCH A MEETING WOULD, IN ANY EVENT, BE PARTICULARLY THIN SINCE THE PRESIDENT WOULD NOT BE MAKING ANY OTHER CALLS. EMBASSY AND CONGEN RIO REAFFIRM THEIR DISTINCT PREFERENCE FOR OPTION (A) OF BRASILIA 1411.

3. AS THE DEPARTMENT IS AWARE, SPECULATION THAT THE PRESIDENT WILL MEET WITH CARDINAL ARNS HAS ALREADY BEGUN VIA A FRONT-PAGE STORY IN FOLHA DE SAO PAULO--SPECULATION APPARENTLY STEMMING FROM INFORMATION PROVIDED BY THE CARDINAL HIMSELF (SAO PAULO 589 AND 590). WE CANNOT DETERMINE THE CARDINAL'S MOTIVES IN RELEASING THIS INFORMATION--IF HE ACTUALLY DID--PENDING AN INTERVIEW WITH ARNS OR SOMEONE QUITE CLOSE TO HIM.

4. BEARING THE ABOVE IN MIND, OUR CONSUL GENERAL IN SAO PAULO HAS CAUTIONED THAT HE IS NOT CONVINCED THAT ARNS WOULD BE WILLING TO MEET WITH THE PRESIDENT IN RIO OR, PERHAPS, ELSEWHERE IN BRRAZIL. HE BASES THIS IMPRESSION ON HIS CONVERSATION WITH ARNS PRIOR TO THE SECRETARY'S VISIT LAST NOVEMBER, WHEN THE CARDINAL EXCUSED HIMSELF FROM ATTENDING OUR RECEPTION IN BRASILIA FOR THE SECRETARY ON GROUNDS THAT HE HAD A PREVIOUS ENGAGEMENT IN PORTO ALEGRE. THE CONSUL GENERAL THEREFORE SUGGESTS THAT THIS HYPOTHESIS BE TESTED WITH THE CARDINAL ON A HIGHLY CONFIDENTIAL BASIS BEFORE CARRYING THE MATTER MUCH FURTHER. WE ENDORSE HIS SUGGESTION AND WOULD WELCOME THE DEPARTMENT'S VIEWS.

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5. WE ALSO SUBMIT FOR THE DEPARTMENT'S CONSIDERATION THE FOLLOWING INSIGHT INTO GOB THINKING CONCERNING A MEETING WITH ARNS. THE BRITISH AMBASSADOR CONFIDED TO THE CHARGE ON FEBRUARY 28 THAT HE HAD APPROACHED THE FOREIGN MINISTRY WITH REGARD TO A POSSIBLE MEETING BETWEEN CARDINAL ARNS AND PRINCE CHARLES--WHO IS SCHEDULED TO ARRIVE IN BRAZIL FOR A TWO-WEEK VISIT BEGINNING MARCH 8. THE AMBASSADOR INDICATED TO HIS BRAZILIAN INTERLOCUTOR THAT SUCH A MEETING WOULD IMPROVE THE ATMOSPHERE OF THE PRINCE'S VISIT IN THE UK, WHERE IT WOULD ALLAY OPPOSITION AMONG CERTAIN BRITISH CIRCLES TO HIS VISITING BRAZIL. THE AMBASSADOR SAID THAT

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FM AMEMBASSY BRASILIA

TO SECSTATE WASHDC IMMEDIATE 6305

INFO AMCONSUL RIO DE JANEIRO

AMCONSUL SAO PAULO

C O N F I D E N T I A L SECTION 2 OF 2 BRASILIA 1558

STADIS//////////

EXDIS

HIS FOREIGN MINISTRY INTERLOCUTOR NOTED RATHER FROSTILY THAT SUCH A MEETING WOULD CERTAINLY NOT IMPROVE THE ATMOSPHERE IN BRAZIL OF THE PRINCE'S VISIT, AND THE IDEA WAS DROPPED.

6. A LISTING OF POTENTIAL INVITEES UNDER OPTION (A) OF BRASILIA 1411 WILL FOLLOW BY SEPTTEL.

7. JUST AS ABOVE WAS READIED FOR TRANSMISSION, EMBASSY WAS ADVISED BY AMCONSUL SAO PAULO THAT BOTH O ESTADO DE SAO PAULO AND FOLHA DE SAO PAULO OF MARCH2, 1978, CARRY ADDITIONAL STORIES IN WHICH CARDINAL ARNS REPORTEDLY CONFIRMS HE HAS RECEIVED LETTER FROM PRESIDENT CARTER INVITING HIM TO A MEETING TO DISCUSS HUMAN RIGHTS. FOLHA STORY CARRIES REPORT FROM BRASILIA STATING THAT GOB IS AWAITING CONFIRMATION THAT PRESIDENT CARTER IS CONTEMPLATING MEETING WITH "CLERICAL AND OPPOSITION" ELEMENTS BEFORE CONVEYING ITS DISPLEASURE TO WHITE HOUSE. CONGEN SAO PAULO IS TRANSMITTING TEXTS OF BOTH STORIES VIA IMMEDIATE CABLE.

8. WE ARE BEING BELEAGUERED BY PRESS ON THIS ISSUE, AND ARE REPLYING TO QUERIES WITH STATEMENT TO EFFECT THAT WE HAVE NO KNOWLEDGE OF PRESIDENTIAL LETTER OF INVITATION TO ARNS AND THAT, IN ANY EVENT, PRESIDENT'S SCHEDULE IS BEING WORKED OUT AND IT CONFIDENTIAL

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IS TOO EARLY TO SPECULATE ABOUT IT. PRESS, HOWEVER, APPEARS ENTIRELY CONVINCED THAT (A) LETTER EXISTS, AND (B) ARNS HAS CONFIRMED IT PERSONALLY.

9. CHARGE HAS A 4:00 P.M. APPOINTMENT AT FOREIGN MINISTRY WITH REPRESENTATIVES OF BOTH FOREIGN MINISTRY AND PALACE PROTOCOL TO DISCUSS VISIT ARRANGEMENTS. IF HE IS NOT ASKED OFFICIALLY ABOUT ARNS ISSUE BEFORE THEN, THERE IS STRONG LIKELIHOOD HE WILL BE QUERIED AT THAT TIME. EMBASSY WOULD APPRECIATE URGENTLY ANY SUGGESTIONS CONCERNING RESPONSES IT SHOULD MAKE TO BOTH PRESS AND OFFICIAL QUERIES.

JOHNSON

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